companies, financial institutions and intermediaries will report such suspicious transactions to the FIU-IND.

Darjeeling as a tax-free area

†232. SHRI SAMAN PATHAK: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of tax-free areas in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether Government are considering to declare Darjeeling as a "tax-free area" for a short period; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The Income-tax Act provides tax holidays and concessions to industrial undertakings set up in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and the North-eastern States. Similarly, exemption from Central Excise duty is also available in all these States and the Kutch district of Gujarat. However, these exemptions are subject to certain conditions.

(b) No Sir.

(c) Area based tax exemptions are inefficient, iniquitous, lead to revenue loss and breed corruption. Such tax exemptions are poor substitutes for fundamental reforms. Therefore, Government is not in favour of proliferating such area based tax exemptions

Continuing rise in inflation

†233. SHRI KESHUBAI S. PATEL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inflation continue to rise in the country;

(b) whether Government are contemplating stringent measures to curb it;

(c) if so, by what time and, until when; and

(d) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir. The inflation has decelerated during the current financial year, the details of monthly inflation is indicated in the Table 1.

Table 1. WPI based Month wise annual inflation (%)

Month	2007-08
Apr.	6.28
May.	5.46
Jun.	4.53
Jul.	4.71
Aug.	4.14
Sep.	3.32
Oct.	3.02

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) Moderation in the rate of inflation is due to supply side improvements in some essential items like wheat and sugar; strengthening of the rupees leading to a decline in rupee prices of imported goods; monetary and fiscal measures initiated by RBI and Government; and administrative measures including import of commodities like wheat and pulses through the public sector agencies. Stability in petroleum prices at the February, 2007 level also contributed to the lower head line inflation.

(d) Does not arise.

Funds for projects included in the Bharat Nirman Yojana

†234. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the main reason for not achieving the targets of the project included in the 'Bharat Nirman Yojana' is non-allocation of funds;

(b) if so, the details of such projects which have been allocated the funds less than the earmarked amount, State-wise; and

(c) the details of the efforts being made by Government for the success and achievement of targets by the said ambitious projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No, Sir. Bharat Nirman Programme for improving the rural infrastructure remains the cornerstone of the Government's policy. For 2007-08, Rs. 24,603 crore has been provided in the budget which marks an increase of 31.6 per cent over the outlay for 2006-07.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The programme is being closely monitored by the concerned Ministries which are implementing the various components of Bharat Nirman Programme. Progess of the various components is reviewed in the Planning Commission along with the concerned Ministries and the State Governments. The Committee on Rural Infrastructure is also monitoring the programme.

Filing of annual returns

235. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the year-wise details of the total number of tax payers who filed annual returns under corporate/business and non-personal assessee categories since the assessment year 1996-97 upto 2006-07, showing the volume of tax collected from them;

(b) the details of advance tax collected from the assessees as in (a) above during the period in the assessment year since 1996-97 till 2006-07; and

(c) the year-wise details of excess tax deposits made by assessees as in (a) above necessitating refund of the same to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The year-wise details of total number of assessees who have filed their income-tax returns during the Financial Year 1996-97 to 2006-07 are as under:—

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi